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## Program Mission

To work in partnership with local governments and other stakeholders to promote statewide environmental interests and healthy watersheds. The SEA Program helps communities manage shorelines, wetlands, waterways, and watersheds; make efficient and environmentally sound land use decisions; and reduce hazards to people, property, and the environment.

The major goals of this program include:

- ❖ Ensuring environmental consideration in local planning and permitting decisions
- ❖ Helping people comply with environmental regulations
- ❖ Ensuring consistent and effective implementation of environmental laws
- ❖ Analyzing and managing the environmental impact of growth and development
- ❖ Conducting research, advancing sound science, and providing technical assistance
- ❖ Educating and informing the public and local governments
- ❖ Reducing flood hazards and erosion hazards
- ❖ Training and involving young adults to protect and enhance the environment

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## Environmental Threat

### Shorelands

Uncoordinated and piecemeal development along rivers, lakes and marine waters can result in:

- ❖ Loss of industry and commerce that depend on and are related to water
- ❖ Loss of public access to waters of the state
- ❖ Interference with the public's right to navigate upon and use the water areas of the state for commerce, recreation, and transportation
- ❖ Property damage due to flooding and erosion
- ❖ Diminishing property values due to loss or impairment of views, incompatible uses and environmental degradation
- ❖ Diminishing or loss of environmental productivity through incremental degradation of fish and wildlife habitat and water quality
- ❖ Increased local government liability under the Endangered Species Act.

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## Programs Origin and Laws

### Shoreline Management

#### Chapter 90.58 RCW, Shoreline Management Act

This act passed the Washington State Legislature in 1971 and was approved by voters in a referendum in the fall of 1972. The Act establishes a cooperative program between local and state governments, in which local government develops and administers local Shoreline Master Programs, and state government provides policy guidance, technical assistance and oversight.

### Coastal Zone Management

#### Coastal Zone Management Act

This act was passed by Congress in 1972 in response to many of the same issues that led to passage of Washington's Shoreline Management Act. Congress responded with a voluntary program that provides resources to the coastal states and territories for planning and managing coastal economic and environmental resources. States may receive funds once they establish a federally approved program to manage their coastal resources.

Washington's coastal zone management program, approved in 1976, is primarily based on the state's Shoreline Management Act, but applies only within the 15 counties with saltwater shoreline. In addition to the financial resources that come from having an approved plan, the federal law provides authority for states to review federal activities for consistency with the state's approved coastal zone management plan.

The Coastal Zone Management Act also established a system of estuarine research reserves for estuarine protection, long-term research, education and interpretation. In Washington State, Ecology manages the Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Skagit County. This includes ownership of tidelands and uplands, plus research, educational and interpretive facilities at the Breazeale/Padilla Bay Interpretive Center.

The Act was reauthorized by Congress in May of 1996 with unanimous votes in both the House and the Senate.

## **Floodplain Management**

### **Chapter 86.16 RCW, Floodplain Management Act**

Originally the Flood Control Zones Act, it was passed in 1935 in response to a series of catastrophic flood events. This law set up a system of state permits for development in floodplains. In 1987 and 1989, the law was extensively amended to provide a system of state coordination and oversight of flood management activities of local government in response to federal mandates pursuant to the Federal Flood Insurance Program.

### **Chapter 86.26 RCW, State Participation in Flood Control Maintenance**

The Flood Control Assistance Account Program is derived from a 1951 law which has been extensively amended over the years. It provides grants to local governments for flood hazard planning and construction of flood damage reduction projects.

## **Wetlands Management**

### **Chapter 90.58 RCW, Shoreline Management Act**

This act, and the state's responsibilities under Section 401 of the Federal Clean Water Act, are the primary drivers for Ecology's wetland management activities. The Shoreline Act applies to wetland areas associated with streams, lakes and marine waters that are designated as shorelines. Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act requires that projects that propose to discharge dredge or fill material in water areas and wetlands obtain a permit from the Corps of Engineers. As a part of our responsibilities as the state agency designated as responsible for implementation of the Clean Water Act, we issue Section 401 water quality certifications for those projects seeking 404 permits. The area covered by 404 authority includes shoreline and non-shoreline wetlands.

### **Chapter 90.71 RCW, Puget Sound Water Quality Protection**

This act prescribes actions needed for the maintenance and enhancement of Puget Sound water quality. Ecology has responsibility for implementing the wetlands activities outlined in the plan, including assisting local communities in using non-regulatory methods to protect wetlands, and developing and implementing the Puget Sound Wetlands Restoration Program.

## **Washington Conservation Corps (WCC)**

### **Chapter 43.220 RCW, Washington Conservation Corps**

In 1983, this law created the WCC at Ecology as well as six other state agencies. The goals of WCC are conservation, rehabilitation, and enhancement of the state's natural and environmental resources while providing educational opportunities and meaningful work experiences for the state's youth.

## **Permit Coordination**

### **Chapter 90.48 RCW, Water Pollution Control Act**

This act authorizes Ecology to implement Section 401 of the Federal Clean Water Act which requires states to evaluate and certify that water related construction projects comply with water quality laws and regulations prior to the issuance of applicable federal permits.

## **SEPA/GMA**

### **Chapter 43.21C RCW, State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)**

Adopted in 1971, this act directs state and local agency decision makers to consider the environmental consequences of their actions. The law was amended in 1995 to better integrate the provisions of SEPA and the Growth Management Act. Other enabling legislation includes the National Environmental Policy Act (42 USC 4321 et seq.).

## **Permit Assistance**

### **Chapter 90.60 RCW, Environmental Permit Assistance Act**

Passed in 1995, this law established the Permit Assistance Center to help citizens comply with environmental permitting requirements. The concepts underlying the law are similar to those in the Environmental Coordination Procedures Act (ECPA) of 1973, which was repealed by the Legislature in 1995.

## Constituents/Stakeholders

### Local Government

Cities and counties, water and sewer districts, ports

### State Government

Departments of Fish and Wildlife; Natural Resources; Community, Trade, and Economic Development and Health; and the Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team

### Federal

Corps of Engineers, EPA, Fish & Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Coast Guard

### Tribes

### Business

Developers, ports, industrial and commercial interests, agriculture, business associations, and industrial associations

### Environmental

Washington Environmental Council, Sierra Club, People for Puget Sound, Friends of the Earth, Nature Conservancy, Washington Toxics Coalition

### Public

Homeowners, business owners and operators, boat owners, waterfront property owners, recreational organizations, the agricultural community, and citizens seeking permit information

In administering the Shoreline Management Act, we serve both as support and oversight to local government. Over the years, our emphasis has been on providing technical assistance and training and on working cooperatively with communities.

Ecology has established and/or participated in a variety of intergovernmental bodies for the purposes of coordination, technical review, or collaborative decision-making. A few examples include the Shoreline Guidelines Commission, the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin International Task Force, the Wetlands Restoration Interagency Technical Work Team, and the Interagency Levee Task Force.

## Major Activities

### Coastal Zone Management

Ecology staff encourage sound coastal management using a variety of non-regulatory approaches, including:

- ❖ Providing technical assistance for state and local governments, property owners and others concerned about property erosion, coastal hazards and bluff stabilization
- ❖ Developing information resources for improved coastal decision making
- ❖ Coordinating the Southwest Washington Coastal Erosion Study to assess coastal erosion and navigation hazards along the coast and at Willapa Bay, Grays Harbor and the Columbia River
- ❖ Providing coastal zone management grants to local governments (see Grants to Locals)

### Results

Southwest Coastal Erosion Study staff have assisted local and state agencies on a variety of coastal projects, including the Ocean Shores EIS, erosion problems at Fort Canby State Park and Damon Point, and wetlands mapping at Westport. A new web site provides Puget Sound shoreline property owners and others with information about living on the shore. Overall, land-owners are now better informed about options for protecting their land, and agencies have better information upon which to base management decisions.

### Federal Permitting

Ecology issues 401 Water Quality Certifications and Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) Concurrence Determinations for water-related construction projects. Our goals are to minimize environmental impacts by ensuring these projects comply with state environmental requirements, and to provide a coordinated state response on federal permitting actions by working closely with several federal, state, and local agencies.

### Results

Ecology staff review approximately 600 federal permits/year to ensure that water quality standards will be met. The projects, including dredging, sand and gravel operations, shoreline stabilization, and small piers and docks, can have significant impacts on salmon and other important habitat.

## Flood Plain Management

Ecology administers the Flood Control Assistance Account Program through providing grants to communities for flood damage reduction and comprehensive flood hazard management planning (See Grants to Locals). We also

- ❖ Review and approve local Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plans
- ❖ Inspect construction of flood damage reduction projects
- ❖ Develop and implement statewide policies on floodplain management
- ❖ Provide technical assistance to local governments and agency staff
- ❖ Coordinate with local governments on the National Flood Insurance Program

### Results

These activities result in good Flood Hazard Management Plans and flood damage reduction projects. Both help mitigate losses from flooding. A post-flood evaluation of some of the areas flooded clearly demonstrated the value of flood hazard reduction measures such as critter pads (elevated land for cattle), elevation of structures (e.g. homes and businesses), and land use restrictions in areas that receive severe inundation.

## Grants to Local Jurisdictions

The SEA Program administers three local grant programs:

- ❖ *Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Grants* — \$850,000 per biennium for updates to local Shoreline Master Programs, shoreline public access projects, and other coastal management efforts.
- ❖ *Flood Control Assistance Account (FCAAP) Grants* — \$3.1 Million per biennium for Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plans and flood hazard reduction projects.
- ❖ *Watershed Grants* — \$9 million per biennium for conducting watershed assessments and establishing local watershed planning groups.

## Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

Management of this Reserve includes:

- ❖ Managing the 11,500-acre Reserve and extensive support facilities, in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- ❖ Conducting long-term estuarine/coastal research and monitoring critical habitats and species
- ❖ Establishing research projects to address policy, regulatory, and resource issues
- ❖ Providing educational programs to teachers, students and the public on estuarine, coastal zone management, watersheds, water quality and ground water

### Results

- ❖ Careful management and stewardship of tidelands, important to fish, shellfish, migratory waterfowl, and shorebirds
- ❖ More than 250 educational programs per year, reaching more than 10,000 participants with information that increases their understanding of estuaries
- ❖ Increased understanding of controlling *Spartina alterniflora*

## Permit Assistance Center

The Permit Assistance Center (PAC) provides assistance and information on environmental permitting to businesses, the public, and other government agencies. Our goal is to provide high quality service by improving the timeliness and effectiveness of the environmental permitting process. The PAC works with federal, state, and local permitting agencies to facilitate timely and coordinated project permitting, and works closely with other state agencies to ensure that PAC services address all state environmental permitting requirements.

### Results

The PAC serves an average of 1200 customers per year. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of customers surveyed gave the PAC high ratings for customer service. The PAC facilitated the permitting of several development projects this biennium and completed two coordinated permit agreements (Stafford Creek Correctional Facility in Grays Harbor County and Heritage Park in Thurston County).

## SEPA

Activities include managing the preparation of environmental impact statements for major projects; providing training and guidance for local agencies and the public; preparing rule amendments and interpretation guidance; and managing a statewide information clearinghouse. We work closely with federal, state, and local agencies to implement SEPA, and with federal agencies in preparing documents under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

### Results

In the first 10 months of 1999, Ecology received 6,409 SEPA Documents, sponsored five SEPA Workshops (130 attendees), and made over 1,400 technical assistance contacts.

## Shoreline Management

The Shoreline Management Act establishes a cooperative program between local and state governments, in which local governments develop and administer local Shoreline Master Programs, and Ecology provides support and oversight. This includes:

- ❖ Updating shoreline master program guidelines as needed

- ❖ Providing technical and financial assistance to local governments in preparing, amending, and administering shoreline master programs and Critical Area Ordinances

- ❖ Providing technical assistance (e.g. geology, hydrology, and wetlands) to help local governments make scientifically based decisions without the financial burden of retaining their own technical staff

- ❖ Reviewing shoreline permits to ensure an appropriate level of resource protection and implementation of Shoreline Management policies

- ❖ Providing training and assistance to local governments, negotiating voluntary compliance, and taking enforcement action if necessary.

### Results

Updated rules, policies, and procedures are needed to implement recent changes to the Shoreline Management Act. Well conceived rules reduce litigation of shoreline decisions and enhance protection of the shorelands. Our technical assistance helps produce local plans that meet the intent of state laws, and also helps local governments make sound, scientifically based permit decisions. By reviewing conditional use permits and shoreline variances, Ecology ensures a minimum level of resource protection and implementation of Shoreline Management policies. Our compliance and enforcement work reduces unpermitted and unlawful shoreline development, reducing adverse effects to the shoreline resource. Ecology strives to achieve compliance without resorting to formal action and has been able to avert many potential enforcement actions.

### Washington Conservation Corps (WCC)

The WCC primarily performs watershed restoration projects in economically distressed communities throughout the state. The new Salmon Recovery Initiative will put additional crews to work on projects aimed at salmon recovery. The WCC creates partnerships and sponsorships with federal, state and local agencies, private entities and non-profit groups to restore watersheds. WCC provides jobs and training for disadvantaged youth and displaced timber workers. Each corps member is eligible for 20 college credits of training and on-the-job experience as well as a \$4,725 post-graduate Americorps Scholarship. Displaced timber workers are hired as crew supervisors and paid a family wage.

### Results

From July 1997 to June 1999 the WCC performed 3,131,059 square feet of bio-engineering work on upper watersheds, including installation of bio-degradable erosion matting, seeding, fertilizing, and mulching. Other restoration methods included log terracing, brush layering, and brush matting of more than 90,000 linear feet. WCC crews cleaned up over 21,000 cubic yards of non-native vegetation and other debris.

Other activities included construction of over 115,000 feet of fencing to keep cattle out of streams, planting 550,000 trees, constructing over 141 campsites, and building over 6,200 erosion control, wildlife habitat, and in-stream structures. The WCC provided more than 800 hours of emergency response.

### Watersheds

In 1998 the Washington State legislature passed the Watershed Planning Act which established a framework for state, local and tribal governments to collaboratively create plans that address water needs, reduce water pollution and protect fish habitat in local watersheds. The SEA Program helps carry out the Act by providing watershed leads for local planning efforts, providing technical and financial assistance to local planning units, and by characterizing watershed condition.

### Results

Twenty-three (23) watersheds have their watershed planning units organized and operating. Fourteen other watersheds have received funding to begin planning. (See also Grants to Locals)

### Wetlands Management

Activities include:

- ❖ Assisting and coordinating with local, state, and federal agencies in reviewing projects involving wetlands
- ❖ Assisting local governments in developing and supporting Critical Area Ordinances
- ❖ Providing technical assistance to sustain multiple environmental benefits, including aquifer recharge, water quality, flood reduction, and fish and wildlife habitat protection
- ❖ Developing new approaches and methods for managing and restoring wetlands and other aquatic resources (i.e. wetland restoration program, watershed-based management plans, voluntary landowner restoration)
- ❖ Developing a wetlands stewardship program to provide multi-agency expertise and non-regulatory alternatives for wetlands protection to communities
- ❖ Enhancing public awareness and understanding of the benefits of preserving and restoring wetlands

### Results

Educating landowners about wetland values and stewardship practices reduces wetlands loss without the need for regulation. The Puget Sound Wetlands Restoration Program has been a successful model of a landowner/government partnership and has been well received by a wide array of participants.

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## Major Issues

### Endangered Species Act

The March 1999 listings of seven salmon species under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) brings the total number of fish species listed as threatened or endangered in Washington to 16. The listing of Puget Sound's wild chinook is the first ESA listing in the nation to affect a highly populated, major urban area.

Two more salmon runs are scheduled for listing in the summer of 1999 and several more listings are anticipated in the future. The SEA Program will review program activities in the coming year in light of the listings and will determine what short term strategies are needed to ensure ESA compliance. Additionally, the program will work with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the State's Salmon Recovery Office to determine the most appropriate mechanisms for ensuring long term compliance with the ESA and restoring salmon runs in Washington. Finally, the program will work collaboratively with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington State Department of Transportation to develop salmon habitat protection guidelines for project-related activities. The primary areas of the SEA Program that are affected include Shoreline Management, Floodplain Management, Federal Permitting (401 and CZM), Wetlands, Coastal Zone Management, and SEPA.

### Shoreline Management Guidelines

Ecology is proposing to overhaul the state guidelines that local governments follow in managing streams, lakes and marine shorelines. The SEA Program has been working with a variety of constituents since 1995 to update the 26 year old shoreline master program guidelines. Ecology plans to adopt an updated rule, begin the process of developing technical guidance materials (a new Shoreline Management Guidebook), and to provide training and technical assistance to local governments.

### Watershed Management

The 1998 legislature passed the Watershed Planning Act which established a framework for addressing the State's water resource and water quality issues as well as establishing instream flows and addressing salmon habitat needs. The SEA Program is making a significant investment in watershed-related work. Fifteen regional watershed leads will continue to coordinate watershed planning efforts in 32 of the state's 61 WRIAs, providing technical assistance and representing the state's interests at the local planning tables. Headquarters staff will coordinate the program's watershed planning efforts by providing policy, budget, and other technical support. Headquarters grant staff will also administer the distribution of \$4.5 million in pass-through grants for local planning efforts. Technical staff at Headquarters will continue watershed characterization efforts in priority areas. The Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) will help local salmon recovery efforts by placing a total of 150 crew members with public and non-profit entities to support on-the-ground salmon recovery efforts. These members began working directly for local organizations for a full year beginning in October 1999. Finally, several SEA Program staff will provide additional technical assistance (e.g. wetlands and floodplain management) for projects being identified in the agency's three focused watersheds: the Dungeness, the Methow, and the Skagit.

### Permit Assistance Center (PAC)

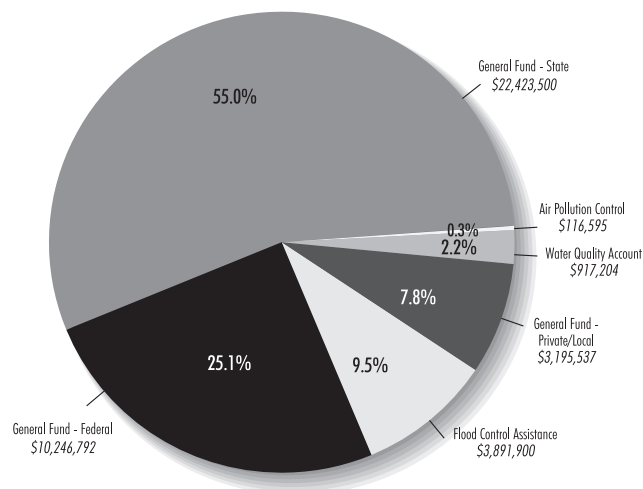
The SEA Program is anticipating legislation that will expand the scope of cost recovery under the optional coordinated permit process. With this legislation and the current biennium budget which provides funding for regional PAC personnel, the PAC will be well positioned to provide the state's rural communities and local governments with up-front, front-end environmental assistance, information, and project management/facilitation/coordination.

# Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Budget

Budget: \$40,791,528; Staffing: 150 FTEs

Fund	Amount (\$)	Sources	Uses
General Fund - State	22,423,500	Multiple	Shoreline management planning; implementation enforcement and technical assistance to local governments; Watershed management grants and watershed leads. Implementation of the Governor's Executive Order on Wetlands and Puget Sound Action Team Plan implementation requirements. Match for federal grants. SEPA; Permit Assistance Center; enforcement safety; the SW Washington Coastal Erosion study
General Fund - Federal	10,246,792	Federal grants	Primary grant - National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Zone Management. Coastal zone management planning; implementation; enforcement and technical/financial assistance to local governments. EPA grants for Wetlands. Various Padilla Bay operating and data collection and analysis grants. Sediment cleanup. Washington Conservation Commission
General Fund - Private/Local	3,195,537	Donations and other miscellaneous income	Padilla Bay operations and Washington Conservation Corps
Flood Control Assistance	3,891,900	Treasurer transfer from the State General Fund	Administer Flood Control Assistance program. Grants to local governments for comprehensive flood mitigation projects; repair of damaged dikes and levees
Water Quality Account	917,204	Tobacco Tax	Washington Conservation Corps
Air Pollution Control	116,595	Fees collected for vehicle license; air registration fees	Permit Assistance Center

**SEA  
Dollars by  
Fund Source**



**SEA  
Dollars by  
Activity**

